



FIA Matters!

Family Independence Agency • Lansing, Michigan • September 20, 2004
Produced by FIA Office of Communications, Suite 1510, Grand Tower, Lansing
Submit stories by e-mail to FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov

“FAP Attack” at Antrim & Kalkaska FIA

From Frederick C. Harris, Director
Antrim-Kalkaska FIA
HarrisF2@michigan.gov

“If you and others are not having fun doing what you are doing, chances are you’re not doing your best” is a quote from the book “Leadership Challenge”. Family independence and eligibility specialists at Antrim and Kalkaska FIA aren’t having a laugh a minute but their supervisors are trying to help. **Paula Dietel**, FIM at Antrim FIA, and **Laurie Luinstra**, FIM at Kalkaska FIA, created a board game called “FAP Attack” with the purpose of making FAP accuracy training fun.

Today's big story



The Antrim-Kalkaska “FAP Attack” board game brings a little fun to the labor of Food Assistance accuracy



Laurie Luinstra

Here’s how the game is played: Each player chooses a game piece. Players roll the dice for a position on the board and, as they move their game piece along the board, they gain team points by correctly answering Food Assistance Program policy questions. Incorrect answers are an opportunity for the opposing team to gain points.



Paula Dietel

Players gain help and attack cards by landing on designated spaces that can be played for their personal benefit, the benefit of the team, or to impede the opposition. Help cards like “Get Help from a Teammate” and “Recovery” allow a player to seek the advice of teammate or a second chance to answer a question. Attack cards like “Sabotage bomb” and “Chained” differ in that they are typically used to garner points from the opposition or to impede them from progress on the board.

Question examples:

Level 1: Changes reported via the new hires report must be completed within how many days? Are cell phone charges allowed as a telephone expense in a FAP budget? True or False: FAP customers only have to have an obligation to pay a shelter expense to have it included in the FAP budget?

Level 2: If the ineligibility period for not cooperating with a QC review ends without the group cooperating can the group reapply? What must they verify? Does this apply to expedited FAP? Scenario: Jack and Jane live in an apartment together; both are on the lease. The landlord says Jack and Jane are responsible for the rental obligation of \$200 each. Jack and Jane say they live together but buy, eat and prepare food separately. Would Jack have a shelter allowance in his FAP budget? Would Jane?

Level 3: What three things regarding child support expenses must be verified at application, redetermination and when a change is reported? What three groups are not eligible for simplified reporting? What are the two exceptions to completing a new 1171 at each redetermination?

Click to read...

Local office news..... 2-3

Your letters4

As players move through various levels the complexity of the questions increases as does the point reward. Play ends when one team achieves 50,000 points, all players on one team reach the third level, or play expires. A team wins by gaining the most points when play ends. On July 27, Antrim and Kalkaska FIA played the game as part of a FAP Accuracy Training.

As the result of early retirements in both offices, these are relatively new staff, with a few exceptions. Both FIMs, while very experienced workers, are new to supervision. In addition to all the other tasks they are responsible for, I am very proud that Paula and Laurie are committed to make work a little bit fun in the context of very difficult circumstances. No staff person would portray their job as any less difficult, but they see this as a good coping mechanism. Contact Paula Dietel (231) 533-7338 or Laurie Luinstra (231) 258-1215 for more information.

Chippewa County kids attend summer camp with FIA help

From Jennifer Storey, Community Resource Coordinator

Chippewa-Luce County FIA

StoreyJ2@michigan.gov

Fireflies, cookouts, swimming, lazy days and vacation camp are a few of the pleasures of the summer season. This year several Chippewa County youngsters from low-income families experienced these delights at Mystic Lake YMCA Camp. Youths were referred to the Summer Camp Program through FIA staff, Big Brothers-Big Sisters of Chippewa County, Strong Families Safe Children Decisions to Actions Program, and campers' parents.

Thirteen youths, aged six to 12, traveled to the camp located in the small town of Lake, west of Clare. The weeklong program featured activities such as nature crafts, tent camping, wagon rides and canoeing. This traditional yet challenging camp provides a creative learning environment where campers gain a sense of achievement, teamwork and positive self-image.



At summer camp (l-r) Joseph, Charissa, counselor Amy and Christian pose on their last day of camp. Campers had many new experiences and made many new friends during their weeklong stay at Mystic Lake Camp, supported in part by Chippewa FIA staff.

These children could not have attended without the donations and assistance of many groups and individuals. The **Chippewa County Family Independence Agency** Volunteer Program organized the local portion of the program. With the generous support of YMCA of Lansing, all program participants received a financial scholarship for 50 percent of camp fees, a total of \$180 per camper. Local donations that sponsored a child came from Chippewa County Credit Union, Gillett, Halvorsen, Leonhardt P.C. and Central Savings Bank.

The Hudson Foundation sponsored two youths while the Elks Youth Committee donated funds for four youths. Loren Smith, FIA volunteer, provided transportation for all children and sponsored four campers through a grant from DTE Energy. Baril Plumbing Heating & Cooling provided additional support.

This year campers had many new stories to share when they returned to school. Thanks to everyone's efforts all 13 children were able to take advantage of the many opportunities summer brings!

Father's Day celebration in Pontiac

From Diane Powell

Oakland County Baldwin Road District, Pontiac

PowellD@michigan.gov

On June 21 the women of the Baldwin Road Office celebrated the fathers who work at the district. The celebration was held in the Oak Conference Room that was lavishly decorated and punctuated by a magnificently designed head table. It was covered with a colorful tablecloth and a floral arrangement that flowed from a large centerpiece.

Each father was personally escorted to his seat, which was identified with a printed named tag, a coffee mug and gift certificate to Bass Pro Shop. After dining on a delicious meal of fried wing-dings, salads, cake, ice cream and ice-cold pop, the fathers were treated to a program narrated by eligibility specialist **Terry Toney**. The program included a solo performance of "Open My Heart" by **Cheryl A. Johnson**; a poem reading of "Tribute to Dads" written and recited by **Tamika January**; and another musical solo of "Today" by **Kelly Smith**.



Some goings-on and taste treats at the Oakland County Baldwin Office Father's Day celebration.

In closing, the fathers acknowledged their appreciation through spokesman **Louis Jean-Baptiste**. He echoed the sentiments of all the fathers saying, "We are so grateful for such a class act."



Kent County pair running to defeat cancer

Mary A. Schoen, Administrative Assistant

Kent County FIA, Grand Rapids

SchoenM@michigan.gov

On January 9, 2005, two Kent FIA workers, [Marianna Martinez](#) and [Cathy Kingma](#) (left-right above), will be running in their first endurance half-marathon of 13.1 miles. They will be running as part of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training. They will be joining hundreds of people around the county to train and run in Walt Disney World's Half-Marathon and Marathon.

Through the Team in training program they will have a coach, a training regimen, nutritional advice, and a great team of athletes with a common goal and lots of support. Besides the challenge of training for running the half-marathon they are committed to raising \$6,600 to support the society in its battle against blood cancers. Leukemia is the number one disease killer of children but it strikes 10 times as many adults.

Marianna and Cathy are very serious about reaching their goals, not only to finish the race but also to meet their fundraising target. They have even created Web sites so friends and family can monitor their progress and/or leave them notes of encouragement. The Kent County FIA office will be sponsoring a Casual Day event to help their coworkers reach their goal. If you want to follow their progress or learn more about their fundraising efforts check out their Web sites:

www.teamintraining.org/participant/martinez-215611 and www.teamintraining.org/participant/kingma-199566

State Dawgs give back to community

From Eva D. Pyles

Genesee County FIA, Flint

PylesE@michigan.gov

The State Dawgs basketball team represents Genesee County FIA and consists of FIA employees that donate their time for charity. The Dawgs have played against the Flint Police Department, Genesee County Community Mental Health, Ennis Center for Children and Michigan School for the Deaf. There's typically a \$3 charge to get into the games with proceeds donated to the different county organizations that participate. Each game raises about \$100 for the organizations that play against Genesee County FIA.

All teams agreed to sponsor one game where there was no charge. However, every person that came to the game had to bring a book in order to get into the game. The books were then donated to Freeman Elementary school to be used in their after school tutoring program. There was a great turn out for this worthwhile event! Genesee County FIA wishes to thank our FIA employees who support the State Dawgs in their effort to give back to the children and families of Genesee County.

Patriotic county wrongly identified

FIA Matters! incorrectly identified the patriotic county in the

Aug. 27 story, "[Diversity action in Jackson celebrates American history](#)".

The story discussed a July diversity event at the FIA office that was based on Independence Day, July 4.



While we are certain they are very patriotic in Jackson County, this event happened at [Kalamazoo County FIA](#), not in Jackson as the headline read. In addition, authors [Russ Surbrook](#) and [Larry Boitnott](#), a pair of family independence managers, are Kalamazoo County FIA employees.

FIA Matters! apologizes for this error and any inconvenience it caused for readers or Kalamazoo County staff. For more information on the event email BallC2@michigan.gov

Lapeer County generosity

From Karen Foster, Community Resource Coordinator

Lapeer and Sanilac County FIA

FosterK@michigan.gov

For many years, the Lapeer County FIA staff has donated more than \$1,500 each year to various charities. Through Casual Friday and snack sales fundraisers they provided Brighter Days, the volunteer fund at Lapeer FIA, with more than \$1,000 in the past year. They have also supported charities such as American Red Cross, the local domestic violence shelter, Special Olympics, hospice, the Muscular Dystrophy Association and others. Since July 2003, their donations to outside charities exceeded \$900. With about 35 staff members, Lapeer FIA staff is small in number but big in heart.


Date: Aug. 16
To: Ellen Devine, Section Manager
CFS Central Operations District, Detroit
Subj: Thank you note

Because you always get things done with such a cheerful attitude and go the extra mile in all you do, you're someone highly thought of. You deserve sincerest gratitude for all the special traits that make you "you". Seems to me that letting go is the hardest thing that a lot of children and teenagers my age have to do these days. I don't want to lose my guardian angels Mrs. Henderson and Ava Thomas and the rest of Central Operations."

Cynthia Dunson

Detroit

■ *Tensley Henderson and Ava Thomas are social services program specialists that work with Michigan Children's Institute wards. "Ms. Dunson has recently begun studying cosmetology," Devine said. "She is an MCI ward aging out of foster care. We are all sure that she will be just fine."*



Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Date: Aug. 13
To: FIA Matters!
Subj: Thank you note

I recently received a thank you card that was addressed to the people of Wayne County Family Independence Agency and the specialist **Lucinda Conner**. I am extremely honored that this customer took the time to acknowledge her present specialist as well as the entire Wayne County organization.

The card also included a handwritten expression of appreciation and thanks saying: "God has sent you all in the time of need. I'm very grateful for this. I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

As manager, I am proud of the service being delivered by my family resource specialists and tell them so. However, it's really special when our customers reaffirm this. We are making a difference.

Margie Young, District Manager

Wayne County FIA Gratiot Seven Mile District, Detroit

Date: May 10
To: Mary Lange, Child Welfare Manager
Muskegon County FIA, Muskegon

Subj: Kellie Kitchen

There is a TV program called "Judging Amy" which spends a lot of time portraying social work. In their world the worker is always able to champion the children's rights and work with families to successful resolution of problems. In real life, it ain't necessarily so. My experience with some social service agency workers has been less than positive both in their manner of handling situations and in their goals for the children involved.

So you can imagine my surprise and delight to work with a young woman from your office who epitomizes what is right about social work. Her name is Kelly Kitchen and she is responsible for handling my great-nephew's case.

She was able to take a troubled young man and make him feel good not only about the move to his new home but also was able to elevate his self-esteem. He arrived with a positive attitude which has gone far to help him at home, in school, and in his social relationships. She took the time to listen to him, to spend time with him and to let him know that someone cared. My dealings with her have found her to be extremely professional but also warm and caring. I feel that she is willing to listen to any questions I may have and to provide support to me with guidance through any problems I may encounter.

Too often people do not take the time to say thank you when someone does an outstanding job. I want to be sure you know how much Kelly is appreciated and what a fine job she is doing.

Patricia Ripperda

New Baden, Ill.

■ *Kellie Kitchen is a foster care specialist with Muskegon County FIA.*

FIA Matters! is a product of Michigan's Family Independence Agency
Marianne Udow, Director Karen Smith, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor Submit stories by e-mail to: **FIA-Newsletter@michigan.gov**